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Art Unit: 3627

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Date: November 1, 2004

From: N. K. Ouchi

Ref: 09/933,209  
Confirmation Number 6453

4 Pages plus cover letter

James, ....

Attached are 4 pages in Response to the USPTO Office Action mailed August 10, 2004. Hope this helps clarify the invention. Please call me if a copy should be mailed or FAX to the official correspondence phone number.

*IN RESPONSE TO your phone CALL - FAX'ED TO 703-872-9306*

My phone number is 408-757-5862

Thank you for your assistance.

*N. K. Ouchi 11/1/04*

N. K. Ouchi

**Response to USPTO Office Action**

Application number 09/933,209

Examiner: James S McClellan

Art Unit 3627

Inventor: Norman Ken Ouchi

Date: November 1, 2004

**Detailed action**

Action is non-final

Claims 20-39 are pending

Claims 20-39 are rejected

First independent Claim.

Claim 20. (New) A Process and Transformation Private Exchange; a first sender; a first recipient, all connected to a network; a first data format; a second data format; a standard data format; a storage medium; wherein the Process and Transformation Private Exchange provides

An Exchange Input directed by a process description, a sequence of process nodes, wherein the Exchange Input provides

means to receive data from a sender using the network;

means for data transformation from the first data format to the standard data format;

means to store data in the standard data format in the storage medium;

a first process description including a first process node for the receipt of data in the first data format from the first sender, a second process node for transforming the data to the standard data format, a third process node for storing the data in the storage medium such that the Exchange Input receives data in the first data format from the first sender, transforms the data to the standard data format, and stores the transformed data in the standard data format in the storage medium

An Exchange Output directed by a process description wherein the Exchange Output provides

means to retrieve data in standard data format from the storage medium;

means for data transformation from the standard data format to the second data format;

means to send data to a recipient using the network;

a second process description including a fourth process node for retrieving the data in the standard data format from the storage medium, a fifth process node for transforming the data to the second data format, a sixth process node for sending the data in the second data format to the first recipient such that the Exchange Output retrieves the data in the standard data format from the storage medium, transforms the data to the second data format, and sends the transformed data in the second data format to the first recipient such that the first sender sends data in the first data format to the Process and Transformation Private Exchange and the first recipient receives from the Process and Transformation Private Exchange the data in the second data format.

#### Discussion

U. S. Patent 5,557,780 ("Edwards") describes an EDI transaction system with an Input Process and an Output Process within the limited scope of the EDI, Electronic Data Interchange, standard. Edwards describes a data environment where the data translators may be templates or self-adapting templates. With Edwards in this restricted data environment, for N data sources and M data consumers, the number of data translators may be reduced to N+M translators. However, in the data environment as described for the present invention, the input and output translators are multi-step processes, where each multi-step process may be significantly different from the others but may have discrete function steps that are common among them. An issue as described in the specification is the controlling and tracking business processes that require multiple steps and uses information in multiple formats.

The difference between the present invention from Edwards is that the Input, Output, and Transformations are directed by process descriptions, sequences of process nodes, rather than the traditional program of Edwards. Each process node causes the execution of a discrete operation such as

- receiving data from a sender using a specific protocol and format
- execution of a specific data translation process
- execution of a specific data validation
- execution of a specific part number translation

"The process description is a workflow route, a sequence of workflow nodes where each node completes a specific task. The Process and Transformation Private Exchange is a workflow system that executes the workflow routes, the process descriptions, where many of the business processes involve processing and transforming information. " The process description is the macro level "program" for each Input, Output, or Transformation process for "Controlling and tracking business processes that require multiple steps and uses information in multiple formats". The Process and Transformation Private Exchange "executes" each process step in sequence to implement the sequence of functions described in the process description. Conditional branching and parallel processing are also described in the specification.

In the present invention, changing the process description changes the behavior. A process function can be reused in other process sequences. For example, the function "store data in the standard data format in the storage medium" is used in the third node of the process description of claim 20, the ninth node of claim 28, the fifteenth node of claim 30, and the nineteenth node of claim 31. A new function can be added and used by adding the function as a node in a process description. Process descriptions, workflow routes, provide clear definition and understanding of a multi-step process, control and tracking of the execution of the process, and structure for reuse of the functions. The logic and flow of a function is not buried in program code but visible in the process description.

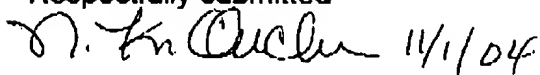
The behavior in Edwards is contained in the program and is modified by "by simple program enhancement", e.g. changing the program. Edwards does not describe the use of process descriptions or workflow routes to embody the sequence of steps to implement Edwards.

In the simple data environment such as EDI, both Edwards and the present invention have similar capabilities. In complex data environments where the processes are multi-stepped and varied, Edwards would require significant programming while the present invention using process descriptions supports these with the simpler development of process functions and the appropriate process descriptions. Process descriptions distinguish the present invention from Edwards and provides significant advantages in complex, multi-step process environments. Edwards does not anticipate Claims 20, 21, and 28-39.

U.S. Patent 6,260,024 ("Shkedy") describes a multi-buyer pooled purchasing system. The logic and functional process of Shkedy while multi-stepped are embodied in a program or programs. These processes are not defined as process descriptions or workflow routes where the sequence of functions are provided by a workflow engine when "executing" the process description or workflow route. Shkedy does not anticipate claims 22 and 27.

U.S. Patents 5999937, 6381597, 6408303, and Published Applications 20010016803 and 20020112114 do not describe the use of process descriptions or workflow routes to define and control the sequence of process steps to accomplish the overall functions.

Respectfully submitted

Handwritten signature of N. K. Ouchi in black ink, followed by the date 11/1/04.

N. K. Ouchi

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